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Note verbale dated 3 March 2014 from the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council

The Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council, and has the honour to submit herewith the remarks made in exercise of the right of reply by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ukraine, Yuri Klymenko, following the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergei Lavrov, on 3 March 2014 during the high-level segment of the twenty-fifth session of the Council (see annex).

The Permanent mission would be highly appreciative if the secretariat of the Human Rights Council could kindly circulate the present note verbale and the annex thereto* as a document of the twenty-fifth session of the Human Rights Council.

* Circulated as received, in the language of submission only.

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Annex

[English only]

Remarks in exercise of the right of reply by Yurii Klymenko, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ukraine, delivered on March 3, 2014 at the High-Level Segment of the 25th session of the Human Rights Council

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Since Ukraine was mentioned today with regard to the grave situation in my country, in particular, in the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Mr. Lavrov, I would like to provide some clarifications.

But, first of all, I would like to wholeheartedly thank the relevant countries and their high dignitaries who expressed today solidarity with Ukraine in these very challenging times for her.

The Russian Federation brutally violated the basic principles of the UN Charter by an explicit act of aggression against Ukraine, representing a serious threat to sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country. More than 6 thousand Russian troops have already illegally entered the territory of Ukraine in Crimea region under blatantly ungrounded and far-fetched pretext of protecting the Russian-speaking community.

We have witnessed today attempts to substitute obvious facts by upside down biased politically motivated interpretations of the political situation in Ukraine and framed allegations of violations of rights of the Russian minority.

There are neither prerequisites for nor instances of ethnic tensions or discrimination in Ukraine. This statement is solidly proved by all relevant reports of the UN human rights mechanisms including the UPR and treaty bodies.

All poorly concocted accusations in violation of rights of the Russian minority, especially concerning the "prohibition" of the use of Russian language, serve the only goal of justifying an act of aggression against Ukraine.

On allegation of right-wing extremist character of protests. Flagrant encroachment of the former highest authorities on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of people have demonstrated an unmatched coherence and unity of all ethnicities and nationalities from all regions of Ukraine in their struggle against oppression. Million protests had explicitly political dimension.

We unequivocally reject any allegations of anti-Semitism. No ethnically motivated human rights violation during three month long rallies has been recorded nor radical political agenda supported. Just recently the head of the European Jewish Union has joined the new government of Ukraine, sharing and supporting its unmatched reformist program.

Mr. President,

Political crisis in Ukraine is definitely over. Consistent implementation of the Agreement on the settlement of political crisis is an utmost priority for the new coalition government.

Let me draw your attention that the former President Yanukovych has left the country and has not signed into force the law reinstating the 2004 Constitution of Ukraine, which brings the country back to the more balanced parliamentary-presidential type of republic. This piece of legislation is a key element of the Agreement on the Settlement of Crisis, signed on February 21, and has already entered into force.

The Agreement continues to be a roadmap for de-escalation of the political tension in Ukraine and its implementation is a top priority for the parliament and new government who nowadays undertake all necessary steps aimed at implementation of the Agreement on the Settlement of Crisis. Human rights reside in the core of these steps.

Let me also recall that the current opposition (Party of Regions and the Communist Party) have explicitly and voluntarily decided not to take part in the new Government of Ukraine. However, they supported the appointment of the new government, which was voted with more than constitutional majority of members of parliament (331).

Besides that I would like to draw your attention that some members of the new government do represent Crimea (Minister for social policy), Kharkiv (Minister for Internal affairs) and Lugansk (Minister for Agricultural Policy).

Mr. President,

The single destabilizing factor in Ukraine today is the presence of 6000 illegal Russian servicemen in Crimea and their blatant provocations against legitimate state institutions.

Key administrative buildings in Crimea are now blocked and occupied not by Ukrainians, who do not support the current government, but by Russian Armed Forces in Crimea.

I would like to draw your attention to the invitation extended by Ukraine to the OSCE's and Council of Europe's special missions to check proper observance of the rights of the citizens of Ukraine of all nationalities and religious denominations in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and other regions of Ukraine.

My country demands from the Russian Federation to stop the military intervention and to abide by its commitments under the UN Charter, to exhibit restraint and avoid steps which could instigate extremism or provoke ethnic tensions in Ukraine.

Thank you.